

METHODS EMPLOYED IN TEACHING SPELLING TO  
STUDENTS IN GRADES FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX  
OF SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF IOWA

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by  
Cecil D. Wright  
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Cecil D. Wright

Approved by Committee:

Bess Hamm  
(Chairman)

Earle L. Canfield  
Dean of the Graduate Division

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The development of spelling skill is essential to written communication. Horn described the importance of spelling ability:

Spelling ability is important even tho spelling is one of the minor subjects in the curriculum. Spelling errors detract from the effectiveness of any written work. They are likely to bring penalties in compositions and tests written at school, especially in Grades IV to XII, as well as in college. They may be embarrassing even in personal letters, and in business letters, particularly letters applying for work, they may be crucial. The advantages of good spelling ability and the disadvantages of poor spelling ability amply justify careful, systematic planning for helping pupils learn to spell correctly.<sup>1</sup>

Hildredth stated the value of accurate spelling in the following:

What is the value of accurate spelling? Spelling has just one purpose--to facilitate the reading of what is written. . . . Correct spelling is evidence of good manners. It is a matter of courtesy to spell correctly so that reading is easier, just as it is courteous to speak distinctly so as to be easily understood. Accurate spelling is one of those things that stamp one as cultivated, neat, accurate, painstaking. The candidate for a new job is judged by the spelling in his dossier no less than by the polish on his shoes.

In the public eye, inaccurate spelling is so generally associated with illiteracy that the results

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest Horn, Teaching Spelling (Washington, D.C.: Department of Classroom Teachers, American Educational Research Association of the National Education Association, 1954), p. 3.



school children achieve in spelling have been known to influence public attitudes toward the school. Some laymen judge the quality of the entire program by how well the children can spell.<sup>1</sup>

## I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to determine the methods employed in 1959-60 by spelling teachers in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of Iowa public schools in cities of 20,000 or more population.

Importance of the study. One of the problems facing education today is that of effective instruction in spelling. The importance of the teacher's role in instruction in spelling was stated by Furness:

Although great emphasis has been given to the teaching of spelling during the past thirty years, it is doubtful whether the children of today spell more effectively than those of thirty years ago. Indeed public concern is increasing because hundreds of children in our schools are spending hours of time for many years without learning to spell. On the other hand investigations of the last few years indicate that these failures are unnecessary and that any child of normal intelligence can learn to spell with very little difficulty in a reasonable length of time. This matter of teaching spelling, obviously is a big job.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Spelling (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1955), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Edna Lue Furness, "Some Do's and Do Not's for Spelling," Elementary English, XXXI (November, 1954), p. 407.

Unsatisfactory results in spelling performance by students may be due to the teacher's method of teaching spelling rather than from lack of adequate research on how children can be taught to spell. In order to improve instruction in spelling, a knowledge of present methods employed by public school teachers in teaching spelling is essential.

Limitations of the study. The study was limited to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade spelling teachers in the public schools of Iowa cities of 20,000 or more population.

The report covered the period of time of the 1959-1960 school year.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Test-study method. The principle of the test-study method is to determine by means of a test the pupil's knowledge of the words assigned for the week, with the purpose of concentrating his study upon the words he mis-spells.<sup>1</sup>

Study-test method. The study-test method requires a student to study all of the words and then be tested on his knowledge of the correct spelling.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Fitzgerald, "Children's Experiences in Spelling," Children and the Language Arts, ed. Virgil E. Herrick, and Leland B. Jacobs (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

List-form. The term "list-form" means that the spelling words are presented in a list rather than in context.

Spelling-conscious. The term "spelling-conscious" has been described by Dolch<sup>1</sup> as "caring whether spelling is correct or incorrect."

### III. PROCEDURE

Literature describing methods of spelling instruction was reviewed to determine the methods of teaching spelling which are advocated by leading authorities in the field of spelling instruction.

A questionnaire,<sup>2</sup> based upon the methods advocated by authorities in teaching spelling, was formulated and submitted to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade spelling teachers in Iowa cities of 20,000 or more population.

The names of the 150 teachers selected to receive a questionnaire were taken from the Iowa Educational Directory<sup>3</sup> on the basis of every eighth name of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers in the school systems of the Iowa cities of 20,000 or more population.

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Dolch, Better Spelling (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1942), p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix B, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur C. Anderson, Iowa Educational Directory, Department of Public Instruction, State of Iowa, (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1959).

An interpretation of the data provided by a return of seventy-two per cent of the questionnaires was made by the investigator.

From the analysis of the data, a summary was made and conclusions were drawn.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II contains a review of the literature describing methods of spelling instruction which are advocated by leading authorities in the field of teaching spelling. The review of the literature establishes criteria concerning methods of spelling instruction upon which the questionnaire was based.

The ability to spell correctly the words used in written communication is helpful to children in early elementary grades and throughout their lives. Children write their names in their notebooks, answer questions for written school tests, write friendship letters, and make written requests for information. As their academic and social experiences broaden, their need for a larger and more adequate spelling vocabulary becomes evident.

Although the normal child learns to spell many words incidentally through reading and study, his knowledge of spelling becomes inadequate for the effective expression of thought as his activities become more extensive. Therefore, a systematic spelling program based on well-selected materials for the teaching of spelling becomes necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The role of spelling work and two desired outcomes of spelling instruction were indicated by Lee and Lee:

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzgerald, op. cit., pp. 239-240.

Spelling work in the elementary school has become an integral part of written expression of pupils. There should be two important outcomes as the result of teaching in this field. Each pupil should have mastered a minimum list of words. He should also have developed the ability and desire to learn to spell the words used in his own individual writing. The child should early come to realize that the spelling lesson is not an end in itself, rather that correctly written material is the end sought. Certainly much work in the use of the dictionary is necessary. All words in important written work in whatever field it is prepared should be correctly spelled. The child should be taught to check his final draft as carefully as an author does before he sends manuscript to the printer.<sup>1</sup>

Johnson took a similar point of view:

The purpose of spelling is to help each child to develop an effective method of learning to spell the words he needs to write. Spelling is effectively taught to the extent that the learner becomes independent in this respect.<sup>2</sup>

Questions basic to spelling instruction then become evident. What words does a child use in his writing? How should the words be selected, and what should be the grade placement of the words in order to provide for the wide range of individual abilities in the classroom? How many words does a child need to master in order to meet his writing needs? What method of learning a word is found to be effective in developing spelling power?

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<sup>1</sup>J. Murray Lee and Dorris May Lee, The Child and His Curriculum (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), pp. 420-421.

<sup>2</sup>Eleanor M. Johnson, "Two Key Factors in Spelling Success," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), pp. 273-275.

A common core of spelling words can be determined by using research in the field of child and adult writing. Horn, Rinsland, McKee, Breed, Dolch, Brittain, and Fitzgerald have published vocabulary lists. An analysis of their lists has indicated 2,650 words as a basic core of words most important for writing in childhood and adulthood.<sup>1</sup> Within this basic list are three lists identifiable by the frequency of use and the grade placement of the persons using them.

List 1 comprises 499 words of the highest utility in child writing, used over and over by beginners and repeatedly throughout the various grade levels and adulthood.

A second list of 970 words, which includes list one, makes up about 85 per cent with repetitions of the running words written by elementary school children.

List 3 contains 473 derivatives formed by adding s, d, ed, or ing to base words. These are the most used derivatives in child writing.

The 2,650 words and their repetitions comprise about 95 per cent of the writing of elementary school children; they are words of permanent value in the writing children will do throughout their entire lives.<sup>2</sup>

This list is useful. However, additional words will be used by students. To help evaluate words to be added to the basic lists, Horn stated that words should meet the following conditions:

1. the total frequency with which the word is used;

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 240-241.



2. the commonness with which the word is used by everyone regardless of geographical locality, sex, social or economic status, educational level, or occupation;

3. the spread of the word's use in different types of writing;

4. the degree of cruciality possessed by the word as evidenced by the types of writing in which it is used and the severity of the penalty attached to its misspelling;

5. the probable permanency of the word's use;

6. the quality of the writing in which the word appears; and

7. the persistent difficulty of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Since a student will wish to use words which are not selected for study as a spelling word, he must learn to spell such words independently.

The grade placement of words can be guided by two principles suggested by Fitzgerald:

Two principles which have considerable merit for grade placement are: (1) the usefulness of the word in children's current writing; and (2) the persistency of difficulty of words from level to level. The best evidence we have for the presentation of a word on a specific grade level is the use that children make of the word in their writing.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest Horn and Paul McKee, "Language: The Development of Ability in Spelling," Child Development and the Curriculum, Thirty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Co., 1939), p. 241.

<sup>2</sup>Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 243.



Dolch suggested a "learner's approach" to teaching spelling. This approach seeks to make the student an efficient learner of spelling by developing the habits of checking guesses, proofreading, and spelling analysis. Spelling analysis consists of studying a new word in terms of correct pronunciation, and comparing the pronunciation with the letters; then determining the difficult parts of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Dolch's emphasis upon word analysis was agreed to by Johnson:

To achieve success and independence in spelling (and reading), the pupil must learn and use phonics and a variety of word analysis skills.

Research indicates that a carefully organized program of word analysis involves several major types of training which each child should have if he is to achieve independence in word attack whenever he has the occasion to spell and write a strange word.<sup>2</sup>

That authorities in spelling do not agree completely upon methods of learning to spell a word was shown by Fitzgerald:

A perusal of spelling textbooks and workbooks shows important variations in presenting a method of learning to spell a word; the authorities in the field have not agreed on the exact steps of learning. Breed found that six prominent authorities recommended 34 activities for teaching spelling of words and classified them into

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Dolch, The Modern Teaching of Spelling (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1950), pp. 5-13.

<sup>2</sup>Eleanor M. Johnson, op. cit., pp. 273-275.

the following activities: looking at the word, listening to its pronunciation, pronouncing the word, using it in a sentence, visualizing it, saying the letters in sequence, analyzing the hard spots, and writing the word.<sup>1</sup>

Fitzgerald summarized his method of guidance in spelling as follows:

1. Have the child approach the spelling of a word through use, understanding, and pronunciation.
2. Guide the child to follow actively these steps in learning to spell a word:
  - (a) Develop a clear image of the word.
  - (b) Recall the spelling of the word.
  - (c) Write the word carefully and neatly.
  - (d) Check the spelling and master the writing of the word.

3. The word should be used frequently in writing.

These suggestions in "Five Steps of Learning to Spell a Word" may be used by the child.

1. Meaning and pronunciation. Look at the word. Pronounce it. Use the word correctly in a sentence.
2. Imagery. See and say the word. See the syllables of the word. Say the word, syllable by syllable. Spell the word.
3. Recall. Look at the word. Close your eyes and spell it. Check to see whether your spelling is correct. (In case you made an error, do steps 1, 2, and 3 again.)
4. Writing the word. Write the word correctly from memory. Dot the i's. Cross the t's. Close the o's. Check your spelling. Check your writing to see that every letter is legible.
5. Mastery. Cover the word and write it. If it is correct, cover the word and write it again. Repeat.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 249-250.

Three procedures have been developed for the teaching of spelling. The test-study method determines the words of the week's assignment which the children know how to spell, so their time can be spent in studying the words misspelled. The study-test procedure has all children study the complete list of assigned words before being tested. The individual test-study method allows the individual child, usually a gifted student, to master the valid core list of words, then test his final mastery by writing the weekly tests with the class. This method involves above average skill in self-study by the student.<sup>1</sup>

The suitability of one method over another was pointed out by Lee and Lee:

Evidence in general seems to favor the use of the study-test plan in the primary grades and the test-study plan in grades four and above. However, for the poor spellers the study-test plan is still best.<sup>2</sup>

A feature of the spelling program which helps to determine the method used in spelling instruction is the amount of time given to teaching and study. As a result of his study, Van Zante concluded that "not more than one-hundred minutes a week should be devoted to instruction in spelling."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 250-255. <sup>2</sup>Lee and Lee, op. cit., p. 423.

<sup>3</sup>Ralph T. Van Zante, "A Study of Procedures Used in Teaching Spelling in the Public Schools of the United States" (unpublished Master's thesis, Drake University, Des Moines, 1956), p. 62.

The integration of spelling with other subjects was discussed by Hunnicutt and Iverson:

Integration--in the sense that spelling practice may emerge from lessons in social studies, literature, and science--is a very essential means of helping motivate the learning, to build meaning, and to make practical use of spelling. There is hardly any better way to direct a child's attention to the importance of proficiency in spelling than that of giving attention to, and practice in, accuracy in all his written work.

The subject-matter teachers have a serious responsibility in the business of checking spelling. However, spelling needs to be taught separately in definite work sessions. We must not allow spelling to "go by the board" in the sense of being casual or incidental; for proficiency in spelling is basic to success in all subjects where ideas must be expressed through writing.<sup>1</sup>

Gates agreed with those who believe that spelling should be integrated with other subjects:

The instruction in technique cannot safely be left entirely to the spelling period. Need for it will appear at times in all language activities--in reading, oral discussions, and especially in all written work.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of the total problem of teaching children to spell, Hunnicutt and Iverson stated:

The problem of teaching children to spell becomes, therefore, a question of adopting certain procedure based upon the assumption that the child has already acquired a large speaking vocabulary and an adequate reading vocabulary. In summary the following procedures have been suggested.

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<sup>1</sup>C. W. Hunnicutt, and W. J. Iverson, Research in the Three R's (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 313.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur I. Gates, "Basic Spelling Techniques in the Language Arts Program," Education, LXXVI (January, 1956), pp. 278-280.

1. Some time must be set aside during the school day for a concentrated attack on the business of learning to translate sounds into written symbols.

2. Spelling must be integrated with other subjects in the curriculum in order that there may be an emphasis on meaning and correct usage, and a practical application of the proficiency acquired during the regular spelling period.

3. There are definite groups of words and syllables in the English language which belong in certain phonic categories. The child should learn such group patterns inductively. He should eventually develop a sense of the probable letter or letters to be used to represent the speech sounds as they occur in words belonging to such group patterns.

4. The beginner must proceed slowly from the simple phonic pattern used to write simple words to those groups of words which are complex in phonic structure.

5. The relatively few English words or parts of words which follow a rarely occurring phonic pattern (the irregulars) must be individually memorized.<sup>1</sup>

As a conclusion to his study of spelling procedures recommended for use by authorities in teaching spelling in the public school, Van Zante made ten recommendations for the improvement of the program in spelling:

1. The test-study method should be used in order to provide economy of pupil time and effort.

2. The words to be taught should be taken from a list based on the best available research in the areas of adults' and children's writings.

3. Not more than one-hundred minutes a week should be devoted to instruction in spelling.

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<sup>1</sup>Hunnicuttt and Iverson, op. cit., p. 314.

4. Correct pronunciation of words should be taught and stressed.

5. It is important that children understand the intended meaning of the words being taught.

6. Instruction should take into account the problem of individual differences in spelling ability and achievement.

7. Words should be presented, studied, and tested in list-form.

8. Instruction should be such that the development of a spelling conscience will be promoted.

9. The use of the dictionary as a spelling tool should be taught.

10. Systematic review should be provided in terms of the words each child needs to give additional study.<sup>1</sup>

The preceding ten recommendations for the improvement of the spelling program by Van Zante were selected by the investigator as criteria for evaluating methods employed by public school teachers in spelling instruction in the school's of selected cities of Iowa.

These criteria were selected because of the research results and the number of authorities by which the criteria were advocated, as indicated by his study.

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<sup>1</sup>Van Zante, op. cit., p. 62.

### CHAPTER III

#### ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

One-hundred-fifty questionnaires were sent to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers in Iowa cities of 20,000 or more population. It was believed that all teachers selected to receive a questionnaire were responsible for spelling instruction. One-hundred and eight returned the questionnaire. One-hundred and three replied, "yes" to the first question, "Are you responsible for formal instruction in spelling in a fourth, fifth, or sixth grade class?" These one-hundred and three teachers comprise the group of respondents to be considered in the remainder of this chapter.

Four sources of spelling words were used by the respondents. Spelling texts designed for the grade level of the class were the most used source by all but one of the respondents. The errors in students' written and oral work were indicated by sixty respondents as being a second most used source; twenty-eight rated errors in written work a third most used source, and three rated students' spelling errors a fourth most used source. Twelve replied that errors in students' work were not used for spelling. Fifty-four respondents rated words from textbooks used in subjects such as social studies, science, or language, as a third most used source. Eighteen rated words from textbooks as a



second source, and eighteen used it as a fourth source. Thirteen did not use words from textbooks as a source of spelling words. The source of words used least by the respondents was a well-known word list such as one by Rinsland, Dolch, or Gates. One reply indicated this a first source. Nine each indicated that a well-known word list was a second and third source, and forty-three respondents rated it a fourth source. Forty-one did not use a well-known word list.

The sources of spelling words in the order of use proceeding from the most used to the least used are: spelling texts designed for the grade level of the class, errors in students' written and oral work, words from textbooks used in school subjects, and a well-known word list such as one by Rinsland, Dolch, or Gates.

In response to the question, "How many minutes are spent each week in spelling instruction?" forty-eight indicated that they spent from seventy-six to one-hundred minutes, twenty-four indicated fifty-one to seventy-five minutes, fifteen spent over one-hundred minutes, nine spent from five to twenty-five minutes, and eight spent from twenty-six to fifty minutes.

Ninety-two respondents gave a certain amount of instruction in spelling each day, whereas eleven did not.

The spelling words were always presented in a list form by thirty-two respondents. Forty-eight usually



presented words in list form. Twenty-two sometimes used the list-form presentation. One respondent never presented the spelling assignment in list-form.

Thirty-one respondents replied that time was always available immediately after a spelling test for each student to study the words he misspelled. The students of forty-one teachers usually had time immediately available for such study; whereas the students of twenty-six sometimes had time immediately available. The students of five teachers were never able to study misspelled words immediately after a spelling test.

It was the pattern of spelling instruction for the students to have review exercises at regular intervals during the school year as indicated by ninety-nine respondents. Two respondents indicated that review exercises were not given. Two respondents did not reply to this question. The students in the classes of eight teachers always used the dictionary to find the correct spelling of a word. Forty-three indicated that the dictionary usually is used to find the correct spelling. Forty-nine indicated that their students sometimes used the dictionary for this purpose, whereas three respondents replied that their students never used the dictionary to find the correct spelling of a word. The spelling list or word group was studied always on a weekly basis according to sixty-six respondents.

Thirty-six indicated that the spelling words were studied usually on a weekly basis. However, one did not use this method of instruction.

In response to the question, "Do all students have the same number of words to master in each assignment?" forty-four answered "no", fourteen answered "sometimes," thirty-one answered "usually," and fourteen answered "always."

Eighty-two teachers replied that each student had a basic word list to master in addition to the words he had shown he could not spell correctly in his written work. Twenty-one indicated that they did not use this method.

One-hundred and two respondents, all but one, taught the pronunciation of and recognition of syllables in words as an aid to spelling.

One-hundred teachers, all but three, taught common prefixes and suffixes as an aid to spelling.

To the question, "Are the 'hard spots' marked in words either as a class presentation or for individual students?" one answered "never," twelve answered "sometimes," forty-four answered "usually," and forty-six answered "always."

Twenty-two teachers replied that each student always proof-read his work for errors in spelling. Forty-seven indicated that each child usually proof-read his work. Twenty-four replied that each child sometimes proof-read

his work for errors in spelling.

A discussion of spelling rules pertaining to the assignment was always a part of the spelling instruction according to forty-four teachers. Thirty-nine usually employed this method. Nineteen sometimes presented a discussion of the spelling rules, whereas one never did.

To the question, "Does each child check his 'guesses' to determine whether he has spelled correctly?" twenty-one replied "always," forty-nine replied "usually," twenty-seven replied "sometimes," four replied "never," and two made no response.

All respondents answered "yes" to the question, "When a spelling lesson is presented, is each word carefully pronounced?"

The method of comparing the pronunciation of the word with its spelling was used sometimes by the students of six teachers. This method was used usually by students in classes of sixty-one teachers, and always by students of thirty-six teachers.

Sixty teachers believed that the student always developed an understanding of the meaning of each word he was learning to spell. Thirty-nine replied that the student usually developed an understanding of his spelling words, whereas four believed this to be the case sometimes.

In response to the question, "Does each student have

some means of seeing the progress he has made in spelling such as a graph or chart?" eighty-one answered "always," twenty answered "usually," and two answered "sometimes."

One respondent did not answer the question, "Is spelling made purposeful for the student?" Forty-two teachers replied that spelling always was made purposeful. Fifty-four replied that spelling usually was made purposeful, and six indicated that spelling was made purposeful sometimes.

To the question, "Does each child develop his own word list to master within a certain period of time?" ten answered "always," thirty-three answered "usually," forty-three answered "sometimes," fifteen answered "never," and two respondents did not answer.

Three teachers replied "always," to the question, "Do individual students trace the form of a word which is difficult for them to spell?" To this same question, twenty replied "usually," sixty-seven replied "sometimes," and thirteen replied "never."

Thirty respondents' answers to two questions were disqualified because of obvious contradiction in the answers. The questions were number twenty-five, "Before the students study the assigned spelling words, are they given a test so they can see the words upon which they need to concentrate?" and, number twenty-eight, "Are students encouraged to study their assigned words before they write any test over the words?"

In most instances the answer "always," or "usually," was given to both questions.

To the question, "Before the students study the assigned spelling words, are they given a test so they can see the words upon which they need to concentrate?" fifteen answered "never," thirty-five answered "sometimes," nine answered "usually," and fourteen answered "always." Thirty answers were disqualified.

To the question, "If a pre-test is given, does each student correct his own test?" forty-one answered "always," thirty-five answered "usually," ten answered "sometimes," ten answered "never," and seven did not answer.

To the question, "If the plan of testing, studying, and then giving a final test is followed, does the student compare the results of the final test with the first test?" forty-three answered "always," thirty-eight answered "usually," twelve answered "sometimes," two answered "never," and eight made no reply.

To the question, "Are students encouraged to study their assigned words before they write any test over the words?" twenty-eight answered "always," nineteen answered "usually," fourteen answered "sometimes," and twelve answered "never." Thirty respondents answers were disqualified.

To the question, "If students study their assigned words before writing a test, is a mastery test given a few

days later, after the students have learned the words missed on the first test?" eighty-two answered "always," thirteen answered "usually," five answered "sometimes," and three did not answer.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the methods employed in 1959-60 by spelling teachers in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of Iowa public schools in cities of 20,000 or more population.

Literature describing methods of spelling instruction was reviewed to determine the methods of teaching spelling which are advocated by leading authorities in the field of spelling instruction.

A questionnaire,<sup>1</sup> based upon the methods advocated by authorities in teaching spelling, was formulated and submitted to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade spelling teachers in Iowa cities of 20,000 or more population.

The names of the 150 teachers selected to receive a questionnaire were taken from the Iowa Educational Directory<sup>2</sup> on the basis of every eighth name of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers in the school systems of the Iowa cities of 20,000 or more population.

An interpretation of the data provided by a return of seventy-two per cent of the questionnaires was made by the investigator.

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix B, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur C. Anderson, Iowa Educational Directory, Department of Public Instruction, State of Iowa, (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1959).

From the analysis of the data, a summary was made and conclusions were drawn.

## I. SUMMARY

From the data presented in the preceding chapters, the following summary may be stated:

1. Spelling texts designed for the grade level of the class were most used as a source of spelling words by nearly all spelling teachers. Additional sources used in the order of diminishing importance were:

- (a) errors in students' written and oral work,
- (b) words from textbooks used in curriculum subjects,
- (c) a well-known word list such as one by Rinsland, Dolch, or Gates.

2. Methods of spelling instruction prevalent in nearly all classrooms were:

- (a) Spelling instruction was given each day, totaling from fifty-one to one-hundred minutes a week.
- (b) A basic word list was studied, in addition to the words the student had misspelled in written work, on a weekly basis.
- (c) Spelling review exercises were given regularly.
- (d) Spelling mastery tests were used in addition to a pre-test or first test.
- (e) The pronunciation and recognition of syllables were taught as were common prefixes and suffixes.



(f) Students saw the progress they had made from one week to the next.

(g) Spelling was made purposeful to the student.

(h) Attention was given to the careful pronunciation of the spelling words.

(i) The students were taught to compare the pronunciation of a word with its spelling.

(j) The "hard spots" in spelling words were marked either as a class presentation or for individual students.

(k) The meaning of the spelling words was developed.

3. Methods of spelling instruction prevalent in many but not nearly all classrooms were:

(a) The spelling words were presented in list form.

(b) Time was available immediately after a spelling test for the student to study misspelled words.

(c) Students had differing numbers of words to master.

(d) The students were taught to use the dictionary to find the correct spelling of words.

(e) Each child was encouraged to proof-read his written work.

(f) A discussion of spelling rules pertaining to the assignment accompanied the presentation of the words.

(g) The students were taught to "check" their guesses to determine correct spelling.

(h) Spelling was individualized in that students developed their own individual word lists to master.

4. The technique of teaching a student to trace the form of the word which is difficult for him to spell was sometimes used.

5. The study-test method was used more often than was the test-study method, although no one method was used exclusively in most classrooms.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions may be drawn from the data presented in the preceding chapters of this study:

1. Teachers in grades four, five, and six of selected Iowa schools have expended effort to meet the individual spelling needs of students. This has been done by utilizing spelling errors of students in written work for spelling mastery. Further evidence of individualization was given by expecting varying degrees of spelling achievement from students.

2. Data indicated that adequate time was given to spelling instruction.

3. No uniform method of spelling instruction was used, but rather, indications were that methods used for spelling instruction were adapted to the needs of the group.

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1. The first part of the report  
describes the general situation  
of the country and the  
main features of the  
economy. It also mentions  
the main problems of the  
country and the main  
features of the  
economy. It also mentions  
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country and the main  
features of the  
economy.

## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

## Copy of the Letter

Which Accompanied the Questionnaire Sent to Teachers

6001 Franklin Avenue  
Des Moines 22, Iowa  
June 29, 1960

Dear Fellow Teacher,

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science in Education at Drake University, I am making a study of spelling methods which are prevalent in actual school situations in the intermediate grades.

I shall appreciate your checking the appropriate blanks on the enclosed questionnaire and mailing it to me at your very earliest convenience.

Your name is not necessary on the questionnaire.

If you wish a summary of the study, I shall be happy to mail you a copy.

Thanking you for your helpful consideration, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Cecil D. Wright

## APPENDIX B

## QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING METHODS OF SPELLING INSTRUCTION

Directions: Please check the appropriate blank or blanks following each of the questions.

1. Are you responsible for formal instruction in spelling in a fourth, fifth, or sixth grade class?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

(If your answer is "no," do not complete the other questions. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.)

2. Which of the following sources of spelling words do you use in teaching spelling? (Indicate the order of your reliance upon the sources by 1, 2, 3, and 4, with 1 being your most used source.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Spelling texts designed for the grade level of the class.

\_\_\_\_\_ A well-known word list such as one by Rinsland, Dolch, or Gates.

\_\_\_\_\_ Errors in students' written and oral work.

\_\_\_\_\_ Words from textbooks used in subjects such as social studies, science, or language.

3. How many minutes are spent each week in spelling instruction?

\_\_\_\_\_ 5-25

\_\_\_\_\_ 51-75

\_\_\_\_\_ over  
100

\_\_\_\_\_ 26-50

\_\_\_\_\_ 76-100

4. Is a certain amount of time spent each day in spelling instruction? no \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are the spelling words presented in list form?

never \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ usually \_\_\_\_\_ always \_\_\_\_\_

6. Is time available immediately after a spelling test for each student to study the words he misspelled?

never \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ usually \_\_\_\_\_ always \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is it the pattern of spelling instruction for the students to have review exercises at regular intervals during the school year? no \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_



8. Do students use the dictionary to find the correct spelling of a word?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
9. Is the spelling list or word group studied on a weekly basis?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
10. Do all students have the same number of words to master in each assignment?  
no \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
11. Does each student have a basic word list to master in addition to those words he has shown he cannot spell correctly in his written work? no \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_
12. Are the pronunciation of and recognition of syllables in words taught as an aid to spelling? no \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_
13. Are common prefixes and suffixes taught as an aid to spelling? no \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_
14. Are the "hard spots" marked in words either as a class presentation or for individual students?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
15. Does each child proof-read his work for errors in spelling?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
16. Is a discussion of spelling rules pertaining to the assignment a part of spelling instruction?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
17. Does each pupil check his "guesses" to determine whether he has spelled correctly?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
18. When a spelling lesson is presented, is each word carefully pronounced? no \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_
19. Do the students compare the pronunciation of the word with its spelling?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
20. Does the student develop an understanding of the meaning of each word he is learning to spell?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_

21. Does each student have some means of seeing the progress he has made in spelling such as a graph or chart?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
22. Is spelling made purposeful for the student?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
23. Does each child develop his own word list to master within a certain period of time?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
24. Do individual students trace the form of a word which is difficult for them to spell?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
25. Before the students study the assigned spelling words, are they given a test so they can see the words upon which they need to concentrate?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
26. If a pre-test is given, does each student correct his own test paper?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
27. If the plan of testing, studying, and then giving a final test is followed, does the student compare the results of the final test with the first test?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
28. Are students encouraged to study their assigned words before they write any test over the words?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_
29. If students study their assigned words before writing a test, is a mastery test given a few days later, after the students have learned the words missed on the first test?  
never \_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_ usually \_\_\_ always \_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

## The Follow-Up Postal Card

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July 6, 1960

Dear Fellow Teacher,

Just a postal card to thank you for your prompt return of the questionnaire which I mailed to you last week, and--in the event you have momentarily put it aside--a request for your special consideration. Please check the questionnaire and return it promptly. At this point a degree Master of Science in Education depends upon your help. Believe me, such help is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Cecil D. Wright

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